Historical Society of Palm Desert

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The Hourglass

Community
Service
Collections
Archives

FALL 2009 VOL. 16, NO. 3

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NEW MUSEUM HOURS

Monday Wednesday Friday Saturday 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Beginning on Monday, September 28

Museum will be closed on Tuesdays & Thursdays

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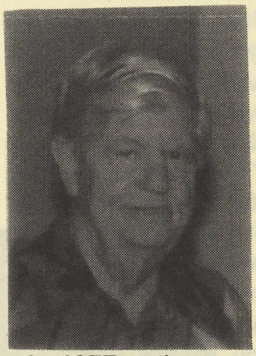


ROY WILSON
1935 -- 2009

This extraordinary man came to the desert in 1967 to be a professor in the journalism department at College of the Desert; he was 32 years old at the time. He was born in Orange County on May 24, 1935, and grew up in the Northern California Bay area. He earned degrees at California State-Fresno & Stanislaus and University of Southern California. At first he worked as a reporter and photographer for the Turlock Daily Journal, after that he was a television reporter in Fresno, followed by an instructor in journalism at Stanislaus. Eventually he moved to Palm Desert, where he and Pat and their five children took up residence on Bel Air Drive.

In 1977 at the age of 41, he was elected to a seat on Palm Desert's City Council. Besides these two professions, he was a member of the South Coast Air Quality Management board, the Riverside County Transportation Commission, and the Coachella Valley Association of Governments. A textbook titled "Mass Media/Mass Culture" was one of his contributions to the field of higher education. As if all this was not enough to keep him busy, he decided the run for 4th District County Supervisor in 1990, and he got the job!!

When he determined to run for a second term in 1993, compliments starting piling up on all sides. Ed Mullins wrote, "Roy is an experienced public servant with an unblemished reputation for honesty, integrity and fairness." Jean Benson contributed, "Everyone respects his opinion." A campaign headquarters was set up on Country Club Drive at Monterey. One of his projects was the funding needed to complete Highway 86.

Realizing the quality of his service, a 'thank you' party was given in his honor in January of 1995; also the Desert Sun inducted him into its "Journalism Hall of Fame." In the 1998 issue of Palm Springs Life magazine, Larry Parrish wrote: The Wilson style is "one of patience -- carefully listening and thinking before he speaks." Jean Benson listed Roy's strengths: fairness, reason, fiscal conservatism, analytical precision (benefiting the whole county.) Wilson's sighs became legendary -- they were prompted by proximity to the irrational. When the Eagle Mountain landfill project alternately soared and crashed for over a decade, Wilson studied it from all angles and voted "yes" to approve it. He listed his top goals as improving migrant worker housing, stimulating local economy, and increasing public safety.

Roy Wilson (cont'd.)
The year 1999 was one of joys and sorrows. In January Wilson was made chairman of the 5-member Board of County Supervisors. In March Pat Wilson, Roy's wife of 36 years died in her sleep. Her many friends commented:

"She was his soul-mate, his partner." - Sheila Gilligan.
"Roy's best friend and greatest supporter." - Corky Larson.
"A source of encouragement and wisdom." - Buford Crites.

Yes, Pat was all that and more. She was a wonderful, outgoing woman who was active in the community.

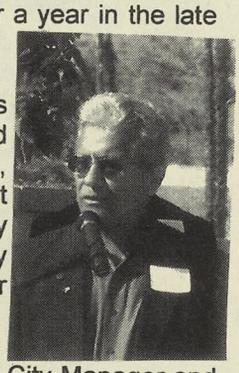
Five years later more awards and joys were presented to Roy. In May 2004 he received the Clifford Henderson "Founder's Day" award from the Historical Society of Palm Desert. At age 71 Roy married Aurora Kerr, a work associate, on January 31, 2006 and they took a well deserved vacation trip to Kuaui. The following year he was voted "Person of the Year" by the Desert Sun's Desert Magazine.

On August 26, 2009 this quiet but assertive public servant left our presence. In his letter of resignation from the county he had urged the governor to choose John Benoit as his successor. On Tuesday, September 1 a viewing was held in the sanctuary of the Palm Desert Community Presbyterian Church. The flag-draped coffin (Roy had served in the navy) was topped by a cowboy hat. He was known for wearing cowboy boots with a dress suit, and he liked country music. An honor guard flanked the casket, adding formality due to this man for years of faithful service. Hundreds of people came to pay their respects.

A "Celebration of Life" service was held on Wednesday at 11:00 a.m. Nearly 1,000 people came and heard the church's chime ring 32 times, once for each year of Roy's service to the public. During the 'sharing of memories' part of the ceremony Mary Bono Mack, John Tavaglione, Dr. William Kroonen, Don Martinez, Katie Barrows, and Scott Wilson (Roy's son) each said a few words. Katie mentioned that when they wanted to name a Thousand Palms hiking trail after Wilson, he insisted they name it after his dog ... Herman. Scott Wilson addressed part of his talk to his father's ten grandchildren, "To you, he is Papa Roy." Advising them to look around at the large crowd, he said, "Never doubt for a moment that one person can make a difference."

CARLOS ORTEGA
1945 -- 2009

Carlos was born in Chiluahua, Mexico on December 27, 2945. When he was nine years old his family came to the United States at the El Paso, Texas border. His family boarded a Greyhound bus headed for Van Horn. As farm workers they followed the crops and finally settled in Oasis in 1957. At first their home was a trailer and shortly afterward they purchased a house. Beginning in middle school, he worked in the fields on weekends and vacation days. While he was attending College of the Desert in 1965 he met Rosemary in a French class. They became engaged in 1971, were married the following year, and had two daughters, Laurie and Annie. He served his country in the Vietnam war for a year in the late 1960s.



Ortega earned his bachelor's degree at University of California-Riverside, majoring in business economics in 1972. For three years he worked for the City of Coachella in their finance department, and in 1977 he was hired by the City of Palm Desert. It was after the devastation caused by the 1976 flood, and he was asked tackle the problem of flood control. The Coachella Valley County Water District recommended a large concrete channel as the solution. They estimated that, with the help of the Army Corps of Engineers, it would take 30 to 50 years to get it established. Carlos put together a three-entity project that included Palm Desert, Riverside County and Indian Wells. They went for a $20 million dollar bond issue, enough to build Palm Valley Channel, and the work began in the early 1980s.

Eventually he was put in charge of the Redevelopment Agency for Palm Desert, was made an Assistant City Manager and finally he became the City Manager. Another project which can be attributed to Ortega's planning is the city's economic diversification. It has made Palm Desert the valley hub for high-end retail and higher education. He was the mastermind behind Desert Willow Golf Resort, putting 500 acres together. Councilman Richard Kelly is quoted as saying, "He's a super negotiator!" Carlos is credited with the local land deals needed to establish the campuses of California State University and the University of California in the Coachella Valley.

Ortega's salary was raised in 2005 and again in 2007, making him one of the highest paid city managers in the valley. But with the onset of cancer Carlos tendered his resignation to the City Council in December 2008 and his position was taken over by John Wohlmuth who was director of Coachella Valley Association of Governments. During April of 2009 Ortega was awarded two auspicious prizes. The Palm Desert Rotary Club presented him with the "Citizen of the Decade" title. The College of the Desert Alumni Association voted him to receive their "Outstanding Community Leader" award.

Carlos Ortega (continued)
Carlos passed away on July 21, 2009 and a funeral Mass was offered on July 31, 2009 at Sacred Heart Catholic Church in Palm Desert. It was attended by 800 people. Roy Wilson gave one of the three eulogies; he recalled how Ortega could light up a room "with his smile, the twinkle in his eyes and his transparent brain churning at 100 miles an hour."

PAT SCULLY RETIRES FROM THE CITY

This Special Events coordinator for the city of Palm Desert has been a source of invaluable assistance to the Historical Society for quite some time. She has been the Society's life line to the city, organizing special getaways for the board members so they would have the time and atmosphere in which to make long and short term goals for the Society. On a monthly basis she would meet with the Society presidents and highly involved members to exchange ideas and determine how the Society was lining up with the expectations of the city council and staff. Pat was instrumental in promoting a spirit of mutual cooperation. Each year when we used the large gazebo at civic center park, she was the one to take care of all the details and make sure we had everything we needed to conduct the Ed Mullins Memorial Picnic.

Scully was born in Long Beach, and with a father who served in the Air Force for 30 years, the family moved frequently. After Riverside Community College and Chico State University she took a job with Riverside County, where she worked for several departments. In 1981 she served as office manager of Palm Springs High School and worked for the National Date Festival, and other places outside the public arena. Finally, in 1989 she became secretary to the City Council in Palm Desert. Here, again, Pat wore many hats and lastly provided leadership for the Youth Committee, Public Safety, and after-school programs. She completed the requirements for her Master's Degree and looks forward to using her expertise to serve the interests and residents of the City of Palm Desert.

On September 2 the city sponsored an informal hors d'oeurves-style 'thank you' party at which friends and colleagues could wish Pat well in her retirement. It was held at the Desert Willow Golf Resort in an atmosphere of fun and good fellowship. The food was delicious, which has become expected of the Desert Willow chefs, and was served to an overflow crowd at 5:30 p.m. During her 20 years of service to the city, her projects have become legendary for the perfection and precision in which she handles everything she tackles. The food was followed by speakers who praised Pat's talents as well as some who preferred a "roast", knowing well the wonderful sense of humor of the recipient.

Currently, Pat is volunteering at Joslyn Cove Senior Center, and she is also the President of the Palms to Pines Rotary Club. Everyone who knows her would agree that happiness is synonymous with busyness in her book of rules. So....though she will stay active, Pat Scully's absence from the city will leave a large, empty void that will be extremely difficult to fill.

FERN STOUT
1923 -- 2009

Stout was born in New Mexico and was raised there on a ranch with five brothers. His military career during World War II was spent with the United States Army and Air Force. It was at this time that he married Leta, a union that lasted 65 years. He attended colleges in New Mexico and finally earned his Doctorate in education from the University of New Mexico-Albuquerque in 1959.

The family moved to California where Fern became director of Peace Corp Training. Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo was the first Peace Corp unit deployed overseas to Morocco. In 1964 he moved to the Coachella Valley and took the position of Dean of Students at College of the Desert. Eventually he became the second president of C.O.D. and aggressively pursued private fundraising to initiate several foundations. He organized and served on the executive board of Friends of the Cultural Center. Other projects that benefited from his attention were building the Copper Mountain Campus in the high desert, the Golf Institute, and the Chef Training Institute. He alsohelped bring the California State University to the C.O.D. campus. Civic duties included president of Palm Desert Rotary, United Way, Palm Springs Friends of L.A. Philharmonic, and World Affairs Council.

Fern Stout lived a long productive life and he retired in 1986. He was a significant player in the history of Palm Desert, and he will be missed by those who knew him best.

DONATIONS

Geraldine Hart c/o Donna Hart Jones	Items: Bob Hope Classic program 76, P.S. Life Classic 2-70, P.D. Post 8-23-79, City calendar 98.	Collection #151
John Kennedy Scrap Book	Items: 51 items & 7 photos for PD - Pioneers - Kennedy, John 62 through 73	Collection #159
Barbara Keedy Eastes Scrap Book	Items: 24 items & 1 photo for PD - Clubs & Associations - Venture Club	Collection #78
Virginia McWilliams	Items: 111 items for PD - Clubs & Associations - Coachella Valley Community Concert Association, 80 through 92	Collection #158

YARD SALE

November 14 & 15 -- Saturday & Sunday

The Society's annual fund-raiser will again be held on this week-end in the backyard of the historic fire house. Over the summer we have picked up and priced some items, but we desperately need more furniture and boutique items. Your good, saleable discards can be dropped off in the back of the building near the small storage shed. If you need to have something picked up, just call 346-6588 and leave a message. We will be looking forward to receiving your antiques, jewelry, kitchen items, household appliances, lamps, décor items, sporting goods, tools, toys, and gently used clothing and shoes. Remember that we are not allowed to accept and sell used mattresses or bed pillows.

Your volunteer help for this event is a must, since we need assistance in so many areas. Pricing, setting up, picking up items, helping customers, cashiers, clean-up, security, etc. are all jobs that require help both prior to the weekend and during the two days of the sale. If you have some extra time to donate, please call the office and have Anne put you name on the list. During this time of depressed economy, our existence and functioning depends on Soscciety members.

MIDSUMMER MADNESS POTLUCK & SOCIAL

Portola Community Center

Is the Historical Society of Palm Desert making history? This may be the case, because we cannot find any record of the Society ever sponsoring a potluck dinner. It was held on July 17th from 6:00 to 8:30 p.m. and was followed by entertainment in the from of gift give-aways. The idea was conceived in the minds of President Barbara Keedy Eastes and Marcy Gregory. It turned out to be a warm, social gathering that was thoroughly enjoyed by young and old. There was a great variety of foods including appetizers, soup, salads, casseroles, meats, and desserts. Rose Roemer made the remark, "If anyone goes away from here hungry, it's their own fault." Millie Byrd's contribution to both the main and dessert tables garnered lots of praises, so we decided to share her recipe. This might be a beautiful addition to your Thanksgiving dinner.

Raspberry Jello (salad or dessert)

1 lg. pkg. Raspberry Jello	Dissolve Jello in hot water. Break up cranberry sauce with a table knife while still in the can, add to Jello and stir till dissolved. Stir in undrained pineapple. Pour half of mixture into a 7 x 11 (or) 8-1/2 x 14 glass dish. Refrigerate till firm, at least 30 to 45 minutes. Spread sour cream evenly over firm layer of Jello. Top with a layer of the remaining Jello mixture. Chill for several hours.
1-3/4 cup, boiling water	
1 16 oz. can, Whole Cranberry Sauce	
1 20 oz. can, Crushed Pineapple	
1 to 1-1/2 cups, Sour Cream	

BOARD MEETING SUMMARY

by Past-President Dick Folkers

September 16 meeting: Marcy Gregory & Don Graybill will be in charge of museum displays.

Volunteer meeting: Friday, Sept. 25 at 10:00 a.m. Help is needed to clean up the museum prior to opening on Sept. 28. More volunteers are needed to greet visitors to the museum. Please sign up. Please submit your time sheets for summer hours.

Website update is needed: no more than $200 will be spent for this work

Mini-Muster Fire Safety update by John Marman. This will be the 17th year, with 10,000 third graders benefiting.

Fall Luncheon: Cuistot, Oct. 28, 11:00 social & 12:00 lunch, $50 (benefiting Historical Society Programs), Speakers: Rover & Marman. Reservation deadline: October 21.

Watercolor Art Show & Sale: Nov. 30 through Dec. 14, 10 a.m to 3 p.m., at the historic Fire House.

Potluck: 53 people attended, $80 were donated, three books were sold.

200 Palm Desert books were purchased for $2,800.

Advertising in the Hour Glass newsletter was discussed.

Note: Don't forget to donate the used ink jets from your printer.

CHUCK SHELTON

Column for the Palm Desert Post
Edited by H.S. Curator, Ginny Folkers

This talented writer would compose a column about any number of interesting desert topics for the newspaper. One that was published on December 24, 1975 was titled: **Snake Swallows Rat, Then Tiny Transistor**.

Most of us desert dwellers don't know what is going on at the Deep Canyon research center. That's probably just as well because what they do there is 100% scientific stuff. Chuck went to see Bill Jennings, the center's genial coordinator, to get some background for his weekly column.

He asked, "What is the official title of the center?"

Bill answered. "It is the Phillip L. Boyd Deep Canyon Desert Research Center of the University of California."

The title honors Boyd. His family has been interested in the beauty and environment and ecology of the Coachella Valley decades before the rest of us knew there was such a word as "ecology." There were undoubtedly others who shared in the creation of this scientific project; but the major push, the quiet behind-the-scenes encouragement came from Phil Boyd. He generously gave of his time, gifts of land and ideas.

At one time Boyd acquired some three sections of land in the upper reaches of Deep Canyon. The property was owned by the Southern Pacific Railroad and he got it as a land grant. He donated part of it to the University of California for a desert research site. From the beginning it has been one of the foremost research centers in California, and part of the UC Department of Biology's responsibility since 1958. For 16 years Boyd served on the UC Board of Regents. His interest in the university system, his love of the desert, and his land holdings in the Deep Canyon bajada all contributed to his inspiration for this desert research center. Today the 14,000 acre center draws scientists from all over the world. The projects conducted there hold a strong attraction for them.

Jennings and Jan Zabriskie were the only full-time employees at this point in time. Others helped out as part-time volunteers. The Deep Canyon center works closely with the Living Desert Reserve. The center, with its creosote bushes, its canyon wrens, its desert big horn sheep, its speckled rattlers, will draw many researchers from the scientific community.

Some of the center's projects might seem a little far out to us. For example one visitor wanted to know how snakes control their body temperature. Snakes are called "cold-blooded." They absorb the temperature of their environment at any given time. A scientist poked a tiny micro temperature-sensitive transistor down into the snake's stomach -- after feeding the snake a rat. The transistor -- a spin-off from our space age gadgetry -- beeped out temperature readings from the snake's innards. It was discovered that the snake did have some control over its hot and cold range.

So it seems that the technology used to put a man-on-the moon may not be a total waste. The billions that were spent could inspire a scientist to wrap a tiny transistor in beeswax, insert it in a snake's tummy, to see how the creature can survive in the hot summer days of the desert.

MEMBERS NEEDED

Have you considered giving a membership to a relative or friend for their birthday, graduation, anniversary or special event? We need more active members to continue our programs and events. Please consider this plea, as well as up-grading your membership to help the Society weather these tough economic times.

SCHOOL TOURS

Remember, it costs $8.33 for each student who attends the Society's school tours. A donation of $25 will cover the travel expenses for three second graders. Your presence and participation are necessary for the Society to function and prosper. Thank you for reflecting on these matters.

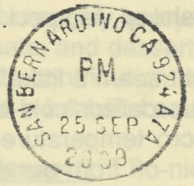
Moral One Liners:

Peace starts with a smile.
Some minds are like concrete, thoroughly mixed up and permanently set.
Forbidden fruits create many jams.
You can tell how big a person is by what it takes to discourage him.
If God is your co-pilot -- swap seats!

SCHEDULE OF UP-COMING EVENTS

Sept. 28, Mon.	Museum reopens after being closed for the summer months (see page 1 of this newsletter)		
October	Mini-Muster Program - 17th annual, 10,000 children benefit		
Oct. 16, Fri.	Power Point on Palm Desert, Coffee & Conversation, Questions & Answers with Hal Rover, cost $5.00	Portola Com. Center	7:00 p.m.
[redacted]	[redacted]		
Oct. 25, Sun.	Golf Cart Parade, "Playground of the Stars" Society fire truck brings up the rear.	El Paseo	1:00 p.m.
Oct.. 28, Wed.	Fall Luncheon, Cuistot's Restaurant, [redacted], $50 benefits Historical Society programs	Cuistot	11 social 12 lunch
Nov. 14 & 15, Sat & Sun.	Fall Yard Sale, in backyard of historic fire house. Furniture & boutique items urgently needed.	El Paseo	7am- 1pm
Nov. 20, Fri.	Lecture: Finding "Faults" in the Coachella Valley, by Harry Quinn, cost $5.00	Portola Com. Center	7 p.m.
Nov. 26, Thurs.	Thanksgiving Day - museum closed.		
Dec. 1-13, Tues.-Sun.	Exhibit & sale, C.V. Watercolor Society	Firehouse	10am-3pm
Dec. 24, Thurs.	Christmas Eve, museum closing [redacted]		
Dec. 25, Fri.	Christmas Day, museum closed		
Dec. 31, Thurs.	New Year's Eve, museum closing [redacted]		
Jan. 1, Fri.	New Year's Day, museum closed		
Jan. 22, Fri.	Lecture: Rock Art, by Harry Quinn, cost $5.00	Portola Com.	7 p.m.
Mar. 28, Sun.	Ed Mullins "Picnic in the Park", large pavilion	Civic Center Park	11:30 social noon-lunch
May 15, Sat.	Founder's Day Award (recipient to be announced)	City Hall	2-4 p.m.

Ginny Folkers, Editor



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